

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

August 5, 1999

Projects Reviewed

Convened: 8:30am

Sidewalk and Drainage Improvements- (SLI #49)

Downtown Coordination

Light Rail Review Panel

Neighborhood Matching Fund

Thornton Creek Watershed Environmental Learning Center

Burke-Gilman Trail Extension Phases I and II

Adjourned: 2:30pm

Commissioners Present

Rick Sundberg, Chair

Moe Batra

Nora Jaso

Peter Miller

Staff Present

John Rahaim

Peter Aylsworth

Rebecca Walls

080599.1 Project: **Sidewalk and Drainage Improvements- (SLI #49)**
 Phase: Briefing

Presenters: Dotty DeCoster, Seattle Public Utilities
 Pete Lagerwey, Seattle Transportation
 Benita Staadeker, Seattle Transportation

Time: 1 hr. (SDC Ref. # DC00077)

During the 1997-1998 budget process, the City Council issued a legislative intent statement that directed staff to study and make recommendations on the issue of constructing new sidewalks. Specifically, the intent statement directed staff to develop several alternatives as to how the City might pay for future construction of new sidewalks and related drainage improvements.

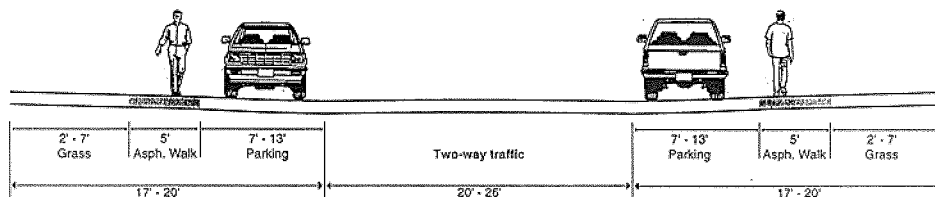
In February 1997, staff presented a proposed work plan to both the Transportation and the Utilities & Environmental Management Committees for review and approval. The intent of the work plan was to identify a range of funding mechanisms and design alternatives that could potentially enable neighborhoods and the City to pursue sidewalk-and-drainage projects that are less involved than the traditional fully-engineered sidewalk projects and at less cost to the general public. Staff also identified the following key objectives:

- Explore various funding options for both the sidewalk and drainage components of new sidewalk construction projects, including using existing transportation revenues, drainage rates, Local Improvement Districts, possible future transportation and/or neighborhood project bond measures, and/or other revenue sources.
- Explore alternative sidewalk designs that may be less expensive to build, address drainage issues, and meet community expectations and desires.
- Identify a preliminary set of criteria that could guide the City in the use and application of various funding sources for new sidewalk construction.
- Develop feasible alternatives for increasing the City's construction of sidewalks and related drainage improvements.

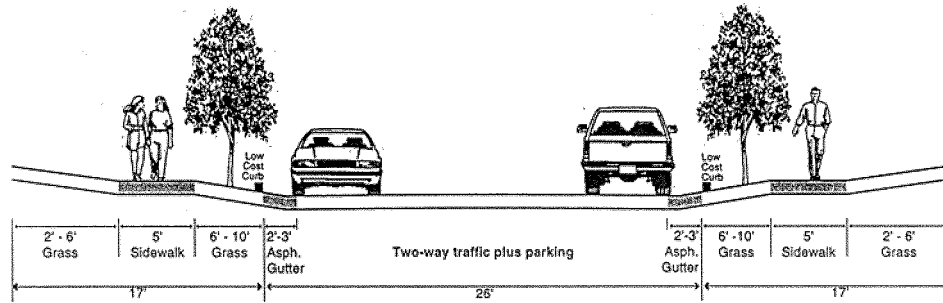
Following approval of the plan by both committees, staff proceeded to develop the information and recommendations contained in the *Sidewalks and Related Storm Drainage Improvements Statement of Legislative Intent (SLI #49) Final Staff Report* (June 16, 1997).

Design alternatives for residential streets include the following options:

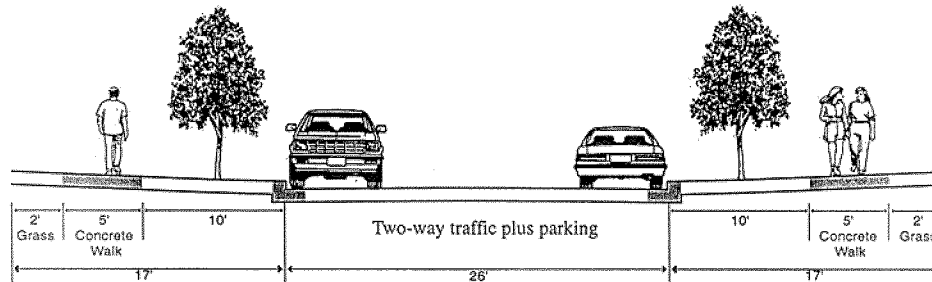
Option R1: Asphalt Walkway



Option R2a & b: Concrete Sidewalk or Asphalt Walkway with Low-Cost Curb

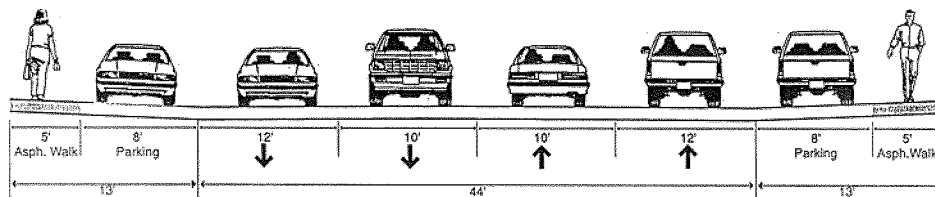


Option R3: Fully-Engineered Sidewalks, Curbs, Gutters, and Drainage

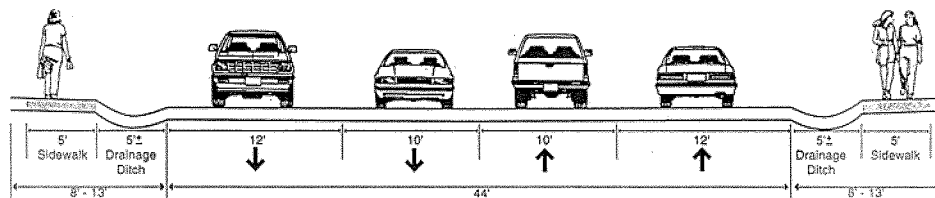


Design alternatives for arterial streets include the following options:

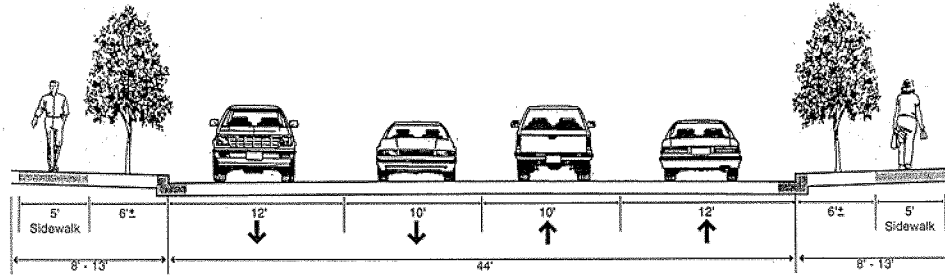
Option A1: Asphalt Walkway with Parking



Option A2: Concrete Sidewalk with No Parking



Option A3: Fully-Engineered Sidewalks, Curbs, Gutters, and Drainage



The ability to increase opportunities for new sidewalk construction and the installation of related drainage improvements is dependent on three variables: the extent of engineering that is desirable or necessary; the willingness to pay by adjacent and affected property owners; and the willingness to pay and/or to make tradeoffs between competing funding priorities by the City Council and the Seattle electorate.

The availability of less expensive sidewalk and drainage designs does make some additional funding sources available. These may include the City's Neighborhood Matching Fund Grant Program, which would fund 50 percent of the cost and neighborhood would fund the remaining costs through volunteer labor, donated materials, and raised cash. Sidewalk improvements may also produce sufficient "special benefit", or value added to the property owner by the improvement, so as to justify Local Improvement District (LID) assessments. Although the cost of sidewalk and related drainage improvements have traditionally been borne by adjacent property owners, the Council could choose to direct General Fund or other fund money to these projects.

For more information contact Pete Lagerwey, Seattle Transportation at 684-5108 or at pete.lagerwey@ci.seattle.wa.us

Discussion:

- Jaso:** This project raises important issues regarding who is responsible for funding, installing, and maintaining the city sidewalks. I am concerned that the responsibility of paying for the new sidewalks is being placed back on the adjacent landowners.
- Lagerwey:** The City has actually never funded the installation of new sidewalks. In the past these costs were usually included in the cost of subdivision developments. The City has paid for repairs to existing sidewalks. The City will cover the cost of installing curbs-gutters-sidewalks on the arterial streets. The adjacent property owners will be responsible for the cost of installing curbs-gutters-sidewalks on non-arterial, residential streets up to the amount of property value added by the new sidewalks as established by an appraiser.
- Staadeker:** State law currently requires that private property owners help cover the cost of public projects when they benefit directly from the project.
- DeCoster:** The City should be required to provide sidewalks in conjunction with City development projects, just as private developers are required to do. There are many opportunities for the City, as the adjacent property owner, to provide examples of low-cost sidewalks around new public buildings.
- Jaso:** Are the open culverts intended to be bio-filtration swales that will improve water quality?

- DeCoster:** Seattle Public Utilities strongly encourages the use of bio-filtration techniques such as drainage ditches, although that is a secondary benefit with this project. The primary objective of this particular project is to provide low-cost sidewalk alternatives. The S.E.A. Streets program, with new pilot projects, has additional sidewalk alternatives.
- Jaso:** I like the provision of alternatives that can be adjusted to fit the character of different neighborhoods.
- Staadeker:** There must be a limit to design variations on the alternatives so that there is some consistency between neighborhood streets. We plan to develop three alternatives that meet the City's objectives from which the neighborhoods can choose.
- Jaso:** In an effort to integrate the sidewalk alternatives with the character of various neighborhoods, the three alternatives could be further divided into parts that can neighborhoods can mix and match.
- Sundberg:** A Commission site visit to a completed pilot project would be helpful.
- Jaso:** I recommend that the program been coordinated with Shane Dewald regarding the flexibility of landscaping alternatives.
- Lagerwey:** Another key issue influencing the design of alternatives is ADA compliance, which requires hard surfaces to be used on the walkways.
- Rahaim:** There are alternatives to impervious, hard surfaces that meet ADA requirements. I have seen crushed limestone used on accessible pathways, as well as permeable concrete products. I encourage you to explore a variety of alternative materials.
- Batra:** How were the pilot project locations selected?
- DeCoster:** The first three sites were chosen based on a long history of needing significant street improvements. Some sites may be chosen with adjacent public facilities or property; which means that the City, as the adjacent property owner, will fund a share of the installation costs.
- Action:** **The Commission subcommittee appreciates the briefing and makes the following comments and recommendations.**
- **The Commission requests a presentation of the pilot project design,**
 - **requests a site visit of a pilot project once completed,**
 - **recommends further exploration of alternative impervious paving materials that meet ADA requirements, and**
 - **encourages flexibility within the final alternatives regarding landscaping and the neighborhood's ability to mix and match components.**

080599.2 Project: **Downtown Coordination Project**

Phase: Briefing

Presenters: Ethan Melone, Strategic Planning Office

Attendees: Cheryl Sizov, LRRP Administrator

Time: 1 hr. (SDC Ref. # DC00080)

In response to the recent revitalization of downtown Seattle's retail, office, and residential sectors the Strategic Planning Office has initiated the Downtown Coordination Project. This project is intended to make the most of current opportunities and extensive public and private investment through stakeholder coordination and partnerships. The coordination effort will build on the South Downtown coordination model. The Downtown Coordination Project would provide a structure for broad stakeholder involvement and for several City of Seattle internal coordination functions.

The proposed City coordination functions include policy development, strategic coordination, pre-development planning, construction coordination, and a business liaison. The project also proposes four interdepartmental downtown coordination teams that include Downtown Policy Teams, Downtown Coordinating Team, Downtown Project Team, and a Construction Coordination Team.

The proposed project includes a Downtown Design & Development Forum that will be hosted by the Seattle Design and Planning Commissions with the Strategic Planning Office. The forum, or workshop, will be comparable to the Downtown Design Forum of 1994 and the South Downtown workshop of 1995. The purpose of the workshop is to launch the development of a downtown urban design strategy and lay the foundation for intergovernmental and public/private cooperation. Likely topics for the workshop include creating a distinctive image at key corridors and public spaces, development of concepts for important underutilized sites, leadership roles, and coordination.

The proposed coordination project will also include the formation of a Downtown Stakeholders Group (DSG) shortly after the fall workshop. The DSG is intended to bring additional stakeholders to the discussion of downtown strategies and will be similar to the South Downtown Stakeholders Group.

Discussion:

Rahaim: At the Downtown Urban Center Planning Group (DUCPG) retreat last Friday we discussed the next phase of the group and what it's role should be once the neighborhood plan is completed. The group decided that it should focus on implementation of the plan by facilitating public and stakeholder involvement. The Downtown Neighborhood has the unique role of being an individual neighborhood and "everyone's neighborhood". Establishing the downtown neighborhood boundary is another issue that needs to be addressed.

Melone: This project will soon need a full-time project manager to act as a liaison between the City and stakeholders and to bring people together.

Jaso: Will the responsibilities for the forum be divided between the Strategic Planning Office and the Design Commission?

Rahaim: The design forum will be sponsored the Seattle Design and Planning Commissions, but a multi-department team will be doing the work.

Jaso: The Downtown Neighborhood has many critical issues to face and a conglomeration of pressures that are different from the stadium area. There are many small behemoths rather than a couple of enormous entities to deal with. Given the current development boom of private development in downtown, there

is an urgent need to plan for how the city will be shaped in the near future as well as the distant future. There has been a shift away from regarding downtown as the “neighborhood for all” and we need to get back to it.

Melone: I agree. I think the workshop can help make stakeholders and the public aware of the broader issues facing downtown in the near future. I see the urban design strategy as a central component in coordinating and integrating incremental development that the South Downtown area didn’t have.

Jaso: It is important that good design be a key component of the strategy. The Mayor has identified design as an important issue and it needs to be an important issue for all City departments.

Rahaim: Developing the coordination project now will help ensure that design issues are at the table early.

Sundberg: The magnitude of square footage being built in the downtown area will have a collective impact greater than the two stadiums in South Downtown.

Rahaim: One of the stadiums is also a replacement project, while much of the downtown development is new construction with new uses.

Jaso: The stakeholders group needs to include not only downtown property owners, but a variety of people who work, play, visit, or shop downtown.

Sizov: Who will staff the coordination project?

Melone: The Strategic Planning Office (SPO) will probably staff the project. SPO was the convener and chair of the South Downtown planning group.

Jaso: Rem Coulhaus wrote an amazing analysis of the City of Atlanta. It would be interesting to get him, or others, to make presentations of their analyses of Seattle at the forum.

Action: **The Commission subcommittee appreciates the briefing and requests future updates regarding the project and how the Commission can be involved.**

080599.3 Project: **Light Rail Review Panel**
 Phase: Briefing

Presenters: Cheryl Sizov, LRRP Administrator

Time: 1 hr. (SDC Ref. # DC00014)

The Light Rail Review Panel (LRRP), consisting of Seattle Arts, Design, and Planning Commissioners, has recently published a report entitled *Scope Briefing Progress Report*. This report is the first in a series of reports to be compiled after each phase of review and summarizes the panel's comments, concerns, and recommendations regarding the LINK Light Rail system as presented to the panel between March and June of 1999.

The report is divided into three main sections; Critical Decisions, System-Wide Elements, and Link Stations. The two key points in Critical Decisions are cost management and system flexibility.

The System-Wide Elements section includes categories such as artist involvement, bus access and connections, landscaping, lighting, passenger experience, pedestrian and bicycle access, signage and wayfinding, sustainability, and system identity. Each of these categories includes applicable Design Principles and panel recommendations.

The Link Stations section includes the panel's review of each station and is subdivided into system segments according to profile (aerial, at-grade, or tunnel) and location. The segments include University, Capitol Hill/First Hill, Downtown Tunnel Stations, South Downtown, and Southeast Seattle. Each station review includes *key issues*, *additional work needed*, *new opportunities*, and *recommendations* were applicable.

The report also includes sections on Other Link Elements and Next Steps.

For more information or a copy of the Scope Briefing Report contact Cheryl Sizov at 233-7236 or at cheryl.sizov@ci.seattle.wa.us

Discussion:

- Rahaim:** System flexibility is a major issue with LINK Light Rail. Many other cities develop systems over time with enough flexibility to make additions in the future. The ability to extend this system east and west, as well as north and south, is critical to its success.
- Miller:** The success of LINK also requires "retailing" the system.
- Rahaim:** Sound Transit is building a system to attract riders to the train without emphasizing the entire regional transportation systems as an integrated whole.
- Jaso:** Having undergone the interview process for a specific station I had the impression that Sound Transit just wanted to build a railroad, with as little interference as possible. This project has a major engineering focus.
- Sizov:** The design/build contract for the tunnel segments has resulted in a need for speed that has been applied to the whole project. The LRRP will continue to press the issues until they are resolved.
- Jaso:** Resolving the major issues later, which may require the Mayor and City Council to put the brakes on this project, will be more costly than resolving the issues as they arise.
- Rahaim:** It seems that operational decisions made now, such as increasing the platform widths at Westlake Station, will drastically limit future use and operational opportunities.
- Sizov:** Sound Transit initially expected more specific design guidance from the panel, but now realize that the panel is interested in the larger issues as well.

- Rahaim:** Boston is an example of an old system that has been upgraded and has well-integrated extensions.
- Miller:** It seems to be an issue of emphasizing good planning and design over speed and efficiency.
- Jaso:** Has there been any discussion regarding artist involvement?
- Sundberg:** Artist involvement is a strong component of LINK. It is unknown how the art will develop, but Sound Transit has a good coordinating artist on board.
- Sizov:** The panel also has some concerns regarding cost issues. If the cost of the system is kept within the limits of the voter mandate, then the result will be a watered-down system where none of the stations are fully developed. It may be wise to develop some phase one stations to their full potential while postponing completion of other stations to a later phase.
- Sundberg:** Those are very difficult decisions. The budget was based on political decisions rather than what would actually be necessary to construct a well-designed and functional light rail system.
- Sizov:** Sound Transit hasn't yet explored station alternatives such as shelling various stations or postponing construction altogether.
- Sundberg:** The station designs will also need to be presented to the whole Design Commission at some point.
- Rahaim:** How will the panel's comments be distributed?
- Sizov:** The Report has been sent out in the mail and we are pursuing a meeting with the City Council Transportation Committee.
- Action:** **The Commission subcommittee appreciates the briefing.**

080599.4 Project: **Commission Business**

Action Items:

- A. MINUTES OF THE JUNE 17TH MEETING: Approved as amended.

Discussion Items:

- B. ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS: On August 14th the BECD Committee of the City Council will address the proposed amendments to the Ordinance that established the Design Commission.
- C. GREEN STREETS: Green Streets will be one of the focal points of the “Design Centers” work plan for 1999-2000.
- D. LIBRARY MOU BRIEFING CULTURE, ARTS AND PARKS COMMITTEE: Rahaim reported
- E. DESIGN REVIEW GUIDEANCE: The Design Review Board Program is in the process of facilitating workshop to discuss how the City-wide Design Guidelines can be fine-tuned to reflect the goals and objectives of individual neighborhoods.
- F. CITY HALL PRESENTATIONS: Three final candidates made public presentations on July 28th. The consultant team selected for the project was Bassetti and Bolin Cywinsky Jackson Architects.
- G. DOWNTOWN URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY: Rahaim reported.
- H. HANSMIRE FAREWELL PARTY: A farewell party for past Commissioner Gerald Hansmire is tentatively scheduled for Friday August 13th from 4:00 to 7:00pm.
- I. AQUARIUM CONSULTANT SELECTION: Rahaim reported.

080599.5 Project: **Neighborhood Matching Fund**
 Phase: Update

Presenters: Pamela Kliment, Parks and Recreation
 Karen Galt, Parks and Recreation

Time: .5 hr. (SDC Ref. # DC00042)

The Commission received updates on the following Neighborhood Matching Fund projects that are being managed by Parks Department staff.

Discovery Park Trail Signs

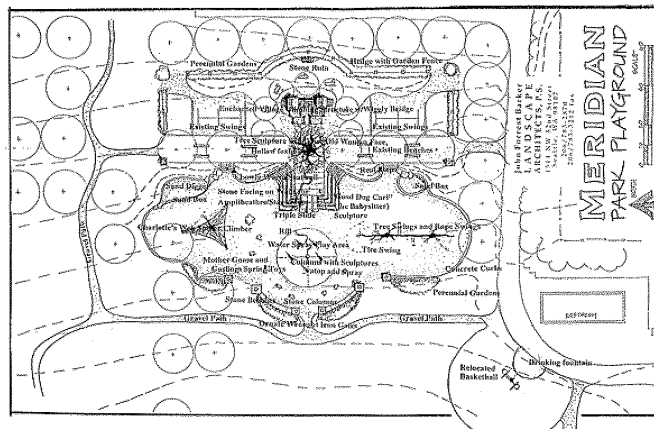
Steve Worthy has been hired to work with interested citizens and Parks Department staff to develop a wayfinding plan for the loop trail at Discovery Park. The signs may be identical to those recently fabricated by Parks Department staff and installed at Ravenna Park. Volunteers under the direction of Parks Department staff will install the signs.

Lincoln Park Annex

This project has been awarded a Small and Simple Grant for design and planning. They will be interviewing Allworth Nussbaum, and Susan Black & Associates this week. The community is interested in some form of community gardening and a viewpoint.

Meridian Playground

The playground, located at the Good Shepherd Center, is currently being developed to a schematic level by the consultant, John Barker Landscape Architect. The community is applying for funding to start construction and will be notified in the late fall.



Sunset Hill Park interpretive sign

This sign describes the mountains in the view from this park overlooking Shilshole Marina. The community designated an artist and is working with Parks Department staff to install the sign.

Wallingford Playfield

This project has recently received a Small and Simple Grant award to hire a landscape architect to do a schematic design for the play area and immediate surroundings.

Seward Park

The Friends of Seward Park group is interested in doing a yet to be decided sign project, probably interpretive.

Westcrest Park

The neighborhood is interested in doing a site plan and a trail renovation project. Parks Department staff is writing their grant application this week.

Discussion of Meridian Park Playground:

- Batra:** The space between the slide and the water feature, approximately ten feet, seems too narrow to safely accommodate children coming down the slide while others run by.
- Sundberg:** The plan seems to be an odd combination of different elements that lack order and hierarchy. It needs to be simplified.
- Kliment:** The limited budget will force simplification to take place.
- Sundberg:** It is difficult to consider the playground design without contextual information about the entire Good Shepherd site. I recommend that the playground design be simplified, with prioritized elements, and that the elements be integrated into a single coherent composition.
- Action:** **The Commission subcommittee appreciates the update of current Neighborhood Matching Fund projects. The Commission subcommittee recommends that the Meridian Park Playground be simplified and that the important historic character of the site be maintained. The subcommittee has concerns regarding the location of the playground and requests a site plan of the entire site.**

080599.6 Project: **Thornton Creek Watershed Environmental Learning Center (ELC)**
 Phase: Site Plan Update
 Previous Reviews: July 15, 1999; December 3, 1998
 Presenters: Pamela Miller, Seattle Public Utilities
 Time: .5 hr. (SDC Ref. # DC00017)

The design team has developed five preliminary conceptual site diagrams for the project. The diagrams include a range of ELC locations and orientations. Scheme A locates the ELC at the north edge of the site with a trail connecting to the pond. Scheme B locates the ELC near the center of the site. Scheme C locates the ELC at the south end of the site near the existing school buildings. Scheme D splits the ELC into three facilities located at the north, center, and south areas of the site. Scheme E replaces the existing school buildings with new facilities at the northern end of the site and locates the new ELC where the existing school buildings are located on the north end of the Meadowbrook Pond site.

The issue of removing the existing school facilities from the site altogether has recently been discussed. Removal of the school raises concerns regarding how the educational objectives of the project can be achieved as well as how the project can foster continued partnerships with the community. Replacing the existing school facilities with new buildings is in contrast to the project's objectives of exemplifying environmental stewardship through recycling and adaptive reuse of existing resources.

Discussion:

Miller: It sound to me like your design team needs to weight the alternative information and give you its expert opinion.

Sundberg: I agree. I support the school partnership aspect of this project. It is an integral part of the success of Meadowbrook Pond. Locating the ELC buildings throughout the site will do more damage to the landscape than consolidating them at the edge of the site. I like the north edge location of the ELC as a site entry point and a terminus to the trail connecting it with the Pond. The community concerns should be considered carefully. I recommend that you push for a preferred alternative from the design team based on the project's principles and objectives of low environmental impacts, community involvement, and being a "good neighbor".

Action: **The Commission subcommittee recommends a conceptual presentation of the two preferred alternatives by the design team.**

In support of the project's objectives of sustainable building and the use of recycled materials the subcommittee strongly encourages the reuse of the existing site buildings.

080599.7 Project: **Burke-Gilman Trail Extension Phase I and II**
 Phase: Briefing

Presenters: Barry Reiss, Seattle Transportation

Time: .5 hr. (SDC Ref. # DC00081)

The Burke-Gilman Trail Extension is a two-phase project that will extend the trail from the current Fremont terminus along the north side of the Lake Washington Ship Canal and up to Golden Gardens Park. Phase I of the project will extend the trail along the Burlington Northern Railroad short track Right-Of-Way (ROW), previously abandoned, to Eleventh Avenue NW. Phase II of the project will continue the extension along the Burlington Northern ROW and Seaview Avenue from the locks to NW 67th Street.

The BNSF short tracts rejoin the mainline at NW 67th Street and therefore the limit of abandoned tracks and available ROW for railbanking. Further extensions are being considered as part of later phases. The design phase for the project should be complete by the end of the 1999.

The trail segment between Eleventh Avenue NW and the locks raised considerable controversy within the community that has not yet been resolved. Therefore, this segment is not part of the current extension project, which means that the two phases will not be connected.

The Phase II segment of the trail includes a portion within the U.S. Government Locks parking area. This raises adjacency and mixed-use issues that are still being resolved. The Seaview Neighborhood Association has been involved with the planning of the Phase II extension.

Discussion:

Sundberg: Why has there been no decision regarding the middle section that connects Phases I and II? What the City Council's issues regarding this segment?

Reiss: The middle segment is in a heavy industrial use neighborhood. The neighborhood has raised concerns about safety and access, as well as liability and inappropriate use issues. However, there are currently a high number of bicyclists already riding through the area. The issues were too controversial for the City Council to make a decision on at the time. Alternative routes were discussed and explored, but none proved to be acceptable or feasible.

Batra: Are there views of the water from the trail?

Reiss: There aren't any water views from the trail directly. However, the trail provides good public access to viewing spots nearby. There are great views near the Azteca Restaurant. I frequently hear from trail users that views of the commercial fishing and industrial areas are also interesting.

Rahaim: Will the landscaping be designed in-house?

Reiss: Shane Dewald is designing the trail's landscape component. We have asked the Seaview Association for suggested landscape elements to include in the design.

Miller: The Burke-Gilman trail is such a crucial part of Seattle's character as well as a vital pedestrian link between many neighborhoods. The issues regarding the middle segment must be resolved as soon as possible so that the two phases are connected. If the two phases aren't connected, then Phase II is completely isolated and doesn't serve the trail's purpose of providing a strong pedestrian/bicycle link.

Action: **The Commission subcommittee supports the project as presented. The subcommittee recognizes that connecting Phases I and II is a crucial aspect of the success of the project and strongly encourages the City to resolve the issues regarding the middle segment of the trail between Phases I and II.**